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ABSTRACT

Although there is currently no national approach to career education in Australia, recent economic and labor trends have prompted the reconsideration of work experience and career education programs. Career education does not exist below secondary levels and prevocational training serves only as an introduction to extensive postsecondary technical courses. Work experience programs originally catered to handicapped students, a focus being continued in a New South Wales pilot project to ease the movement of handicapped students into the working world. Work experience programs, now generally considered to be a means of experiencing a work situation and not as specific vocational training, vary greatly in size, scope, aims, availability, and emphasis throughout the country. A trend toward comprehensive education, which integrates general, vocational, and technical education, is increasing the number and general acceptance of such programs. Existing labor/industry laws have been a barrier to work experience programs. In the state of Victoria, the 1974 Education Act overcame legal restrictions on student labor and work experience programs, serving to increase numbers of secondary students there. Non-formal government programs aim at developing the job seeking skills, literacy, and numeracy abilities of out-of-work youth aged 15-19. (SB)

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COMBINING EDUCATION AND WORK

Experiences in Asia and Oceania

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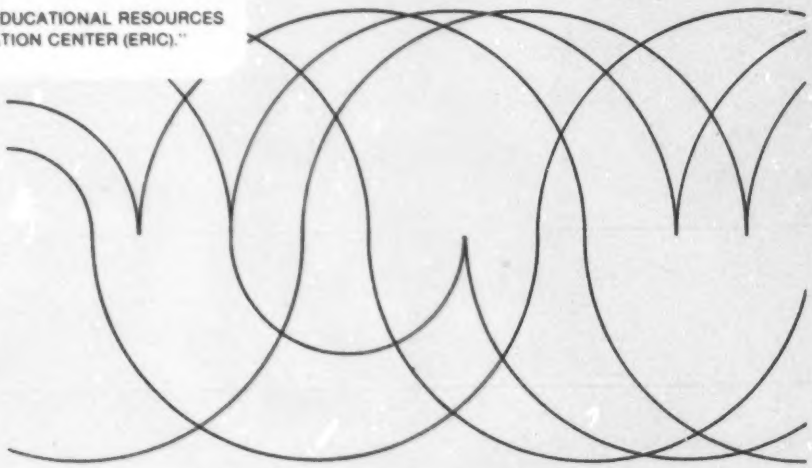

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CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE	v
PART I	
A. General Description and Policy Trends	1
B. Reorienting School Programmes to Combine Education and Productive Work Experiences	9
C. Combining Education and Work for Out-of-School Population	18
PART II	
A. Work Experience Programmes in Victorian Secondary Schools	20
B. Work Experience Programmes for Handicapped Secondary School Age Students in New South Wales	32
ANNEX	
Students' Social and Vocational Assessment Sheet ...	38

PREFACE

Many countries in Asia and Oceania, as in other regions of the world, are engaged in reorienting their education systems. A basic concern underlying these efforts is to make education functional and relevant to the needs of the individual and of the society. It is increasingly felt that the education systems tend to get isolated from the larger social, cultural and development goals of the society. This isolation is engendered when the process of learning is separated from the context of action and work, and is nowhere as marked as in the failure of education to provide children and youth with an active comprehension of the world of work.

The response to the problem is reflected in a variety of programmes underway in several countries of Asia and Oceania. Considering the importance of the issue, the Fourth Regional Conference of Ministers of Education and Those Responsible for Economic Planning in Asia and Oceania (24 July - 1 August 1978, Colombo) has "Interlinking of Education and Productive Work" as one of the major themes of the Conference.

The country studies presented in the present series were received in response to Unesco's request to the Member States. By the time of going to the press, studies from twelve countries were received and they comprise the present series being issued on the occasion of the Fourth Regional Conference. The assistance of Unesco National Commissions in these countries in having the studies prepared and of the organizations and scholars who have been responsible for them is gratefully acknowledged. These studies cover a wide spectrum of experiences, ranging from experimental projects to comprehensive, system-wide programmes, and detailed descriptions are offered of one or more projects in actual operation. It is hoped to add to the series as more country studies become available.

Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of Unesco.

PART I

A. General Description and Policy Trends

1. National education policy on combining education and productive work experience

Under the provision of the Australian Constitution, education is primarily a responsibility of the State Governments, although the Australian Government provides financial assistance for education in the States. It has responsibility for education in the Territories.

Within the States and Territories over the last ten years, work experience programmes have been developed as an integral part of career education programmes. Since 1974, however, youth unemployment has risen to particularly high levels, - by February 1978 21.6 per cent of the 15-19 year old proportion of the full-time work-force was unemployed compared to 7.3 per cent of the total full-time workforce unemployed - and the National government has become more involved in developing policies to assist young people in their transition from school to work.

There has been a number of reviews and reports on the transition issue at the national level, all of which have included consideration of work experience programmes.

Work experience was discussed by an OECD Review of Education Policy undertaken during 1976 when it was concluded that properly designed work experience schemes should form an important part of the careers education curriculum of all young people. It was also considered in detail by a National Working Party on the Transition from Secondary Education to Employment. In its report, published in June 1976, the Working Party recommended that urgent attention be given to legislative problems of the programmes, and that the programmes' effectiveness be researched.

A more recent Working Party, the Commonwealth/State Working Party on the Transition from School to Work or Further Study, is currently appraising career education programmes, and as a part of this will be looking at the overall provision of work experience programmes. The

Working Party intends to report on the efficiency of career education, including work experience, in reaching a wide range of students and exposing them to a large number of career options.

In addition, a Committee of Inquiry into Education and Training was established in 1976 by the Australian Government to report by mid-1978, on possible developments up to the year 2000. From this inquiry broad national guidelines should be developed in regard to the role of the educational system in preparing people for work and influencing their choice of occupation.

2. Major recent educational reform or re-organization

Until recently Australian education systems in the States and Territories have been characterized by bureaucratic administrations, with standards and curricula being set by central administration in Departments of Education, and students being required to sit for State-wide external examinations on completion of Years 10 and 12.

The 1970's have seen a move to decentralization in education, both in terms of administration and curriculum development, with the result that there has been a trend towards the development of school-based curricula and increasing reliance on internal assessment of rather than external examinations at the completion of schooling. At the same time, there has been a move towards greater community involvement in education at the school level, to enable schools and the community to participate together in the overall development of youth within a social environment.

The recent increases in youth unemployment have brought into question the validity of these educational reforms. Employers have complained that without external assessment it is difficult to make proper comparisons between various applicants for jobs; there has been criticism of the levels of achievement by school leavers in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, and assertions that overall standards have deteriorated. While such criticisms are difficult to substantiate, education enquiries have been concerned with such issues and have underlined the need for school programmes to be developed with greater awareness of community and work-force requirements once pupils leave school. At the same time, the view

has been sustained that the basic aim of education is to develop all aspects of individuals rather than to train them for particular work-force skills.

As an element of recent educational reform, there has been a developing emphasis on the importance of career education programmes in schools, and this was reflected by the advent of the First National Career Education Conference during May 1977. The Conference resolved that career education programmes should be reviewed by all States and Territories in the context of their total education programmes, and saw the need for national co-ordination of career education bodies to determine priorities and develop recommendations. This resolution of the Conference will be taken up by the Commonwealth/State Working Party on the Transition from School to Work or Further Study.

3. Administrative machinery for programmes of combining education and work

Work experience programmes in Australia arose out of the dissatisfaction felt by some teachers with school programmes which failed to cater effectively for non-academically inclined students as well as handicapped and specially disadvantaged students. The development by individual schools of their own work experience programmes was made possible by the trend towards decentralization of decision-making in education.

Around 1973, with a rapid expansion of work experience programmes, attention was drawn to the legal implications, safety hazards and industrial implications of the programmes. As a result most States restricted further expansion pending an investigation of these implications.

Recognizing that work experience raised questions of a national concern, a working party was set up in 1974 by Commonwealth and State Ministers for Labour to investigate the nature and implications of work experience. The working party confirmed in its report that work experience as it was then being developed raised a number of problems relating to payment, compensation insurance, safety, industrial legislation, the involvement of trade unions, Federal and State industrial awards, and the conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Individual States have since proceeded at varying paces to solve the legal and administrative problems, and so far, only Victoria has passed work experience legislation, although other State committees have recommended such action. Nevertheless, work experience programmes in all States are still very much in a process of adaptation, not only to industrial and educational structures but also to attitudes within the school and community.

At the Commonwealth level, the Working Party on the Transition from Secondary Education to Employment recommended in its report in June 1976 that urgent attention be given to solving legislative problems such as the application of Federal wage awards and Workers Compensation Acts to students in work experience programmes, but this has not yet been resolved.

It is generally incumbent on individual teachers to organize work experience programmes within schools, including the canvassing of employers to provide work places and the co-operation of teachers to release students from normal classes to participate in work experience. In Victoria, however, a full-time Work Experience Executive Officer was appointed in 1976 to act as a liaison officer between the Education Department, schools, employers and unions, to foster regional co-ordination of programmes and to promote the ideas and objectives of work experience to the community.

4. Inter-departmental co-ordination at the central and field level

Where co-ordination at the State, or Commonwealth level or both levels is required, to ensure that input is made from all areas involved, it is normal to establish representative committees, generally involving government officials from various relevant departments, but also at times involving representatives from other interested organizations such as teacher groups, employers, unions and parents. The Commonwealth/State Working Party on the Transition from School to Work or Further Study is comprised of government officials, while bodies at State level such as the Youth Work Unit in South Australia, and the Work Experience in Schools Committee in Victoria are more broadly representative.

5. Priority areas

Two major priority areas to which special emphasis is being given are early school leavers and career education and guidance programmes.

When undertaking its review of Australian education policy during 1976, the OECD Group of Examiners singled out early school leavers, that is, students who leave school at or around the minimum leaving age of 15, as the group to which the least assistance is given to enable them to make the transition into the work-force successfully. Within the school context, potential early school leavers are likely to be the least responsive to encouragement to strive for scholastic achievement. They may be motivated or encouraged to leave school at the minimum leaving age rather than to undertake or receive intensive study to help overcome deficiencies of literacy and numeracy.

At the same time, secondary schools may not be well organized to provide the individualized attention and remediation required by poor achievers, including specialist assistance where this is necessary. Also, the scale of provision of careers teachers is often limited with full-time careers teachers being comparatively rare. They are apt to be most heavily engaged in assisting the better school achievers in selecting post-secondary courses, to the possible detriment of assisting early school leavers in their orientation to employment. On its establishment the Working Party on the Transition from School to Work or Further Study was asked to pay early attention to developing practical proposals to assist early school leavers in their transition into the work-force.

The Working Party is also currently reviewing career education guidance programmes and hopes to provide constructive recommendations on overcoming identified deficiencies to ensure more efficient use of such services by school leavers. In its review of Australian education during 1976 the OECD Group of Examiners commented that there is general agreement in Australia that current provision of counselling and information services for secondary school students is variable and inadequate. The Examiners felt that Australia needs a rethinking of the various kinds of guidance and counselling services in the context of the total curriculum of the schools and the needs of young people both inside and outside formal educational institutions. They also strongly believed that a

co-ordinating agency should be established to provide transition services for young people from about the eighth or ninth year of schooling until they are settled into satisfactory employment and that in doing so a number of basic principles should be borne in mind. These include the provision of at least one full-time, trained careers education specialist in each average-sized secondary school, making careers education a compulsory subject for at least years nine and ten, statewide information services and the involvement of employers and trade unions.

The Examiners' comments were reinforced by the resolution of the First National Career Education Conference in 1977 urging the review of career education programmes. The Working Party on Transition from School to Work or Further Study is currently investigating these issues, but believes that the introduction of career education into schools as a compulsory subject will require detailed consideration prior to such action being taken.

6. National problems for which work experience may offer solutions

As discussed previously, the increasing emphasis on career education programmes, including work experience, has arisen at a time of increasing youth unemployment and a questioning of the relevance of education in preparing young people for life, including work, after completion of school.

The past three years have witnessed a dramatic change in the general state of the Australian labour market. Until 1974, Australia enjoyed three decades during which the rate of unemployment rarely exceeded two per cent, whereas it is now not expected in the foreseeable future to fall below five per cent overall, even with improvements in the economy. As mentioned earlier, the high unemployment level includes a disproportionately high level of youth unemployment, and this is seen as a long-term labour market problem. Employers are increasingly opting for other groups such as married women, as they require less investment in terms of training and experience than juniors. This trend is also emphasized by the strong movement towards increased part-time employment which has continued to grow throughout the seventies at an average annual rate of six per cent for females. As well, there is a trend towards 'economizing'

on labour as illustrated by the increased emphasis on self-service in many retailing areas, the growth of computer operations in banks and insurance companies and the continuing investment by industry generally in a variety of 'labour saving' equipment.

At the same time, however, there are shortages of certain specific types of labour in various professional, technical and skilled occupations.

There are indications that these problems are likely to persist for at least several years to come. There has been an increasing imbalance between the pattern of labour demand and the outflows from educational institutions. Increased school retention rates, the rapid expansion of tertiary education and a proliferation of new courses and specialities related to labour market needs, have been accompanied by a relative neglect of the trade training area. In addition, later entry into the work-force after additional study, not necessarily related to labour market needs, has led to a widening of the gap between employment aspirations of many individuals and the realities of the labour market.

If an approach to pre-1974 employment levels is to be achieved, structural imbalances must be overcome as well as the present deficiency in labour demand. Increasing emphasis must be placed on manpower policies and programmes and these in turn need to be supported by, and to act in complementary fashion to, education policy at both school and post-school level.

The increasing use of work experience programmes, particularly for early school leavers, provides a means for students to become aware, not only of the skill requirements for specific jobs, but of the demands that will be placed upon them once entering the work-force. They do not, however, provide the means of acquiring vocational skills.

The former Technical and Further Education Commission, now a Council of the Tertiary Education Commission, has expressed the hope that link courses with schools may be developed in Australian TAFE institutions, and believes them to have some advantage over work experience programmes. The rationale for this is that TAFE colleges are more likely to have under one roof the facilities and staff to acquaint

school pupils with a wide range of vocational experiences, and that link programmes do not introduce problems inherent in work experience programmes such as payment requirements or workers compensation.

However arranged, it is necessary that work experience schemes allow meaningful choice of employment preferences to aid the development of skills and to assist in the transition process. The programmes should be beneficial to the students and to the community as a whole.

It would be hoped also that work experience programmes may assist both students and teachers to be more aware of the functional requirements of the work-force in relation to literacy and numeracy skills. Wider acquaintance with the working environment and feedback from employers participating in the schemes, could assist teachers to modify their programmes to ensure that students have covered required areas of literacy and numeracy prior to leaving school.

7. Research and development

Although Australia has no established institutions engaged solely in research into problems relating to combining education and productive work experiences, research is being undertaken throughout Australia on this subject, and the Commonwealth/State Working Party on the Transition from School to Work or Further Study has been asked to coordinate programmes of research as well as commission, or conduct, research in this area.

At the national level, the Schools Commission has a project, nearing completion, on work experience programmes in schools, and the States have conducted research into, and development of, programmes in their own schools. For example, in New South Wales, a Committee (the Scott Committee) investigated and advised on the implementation of work experience programmes in government secondary schools in that State while in Victoria a survey was undertaken by Mr. P. Cole of schools conducting work experience programmes. As well, Mrs. C. Blakers, has recently completed a research study for the Education Research Unit of the Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University, on School and Work, in which she reviews work experience programme development throughout Australia.

B. Re-orienting School Programmes to Combine Education and Productive Work Experiences

1. Programmes for combining education and work experiences

Objectives

The work experience programmes developed throughout Australia over the last few years have been aimed at providing opportunity for young people to gain experience in a work situation as part of their schooling. Work experience has been used in Australia in technical high schools for some time to provide students with vocational courses, and as mentioned earlier, it arose in schools to overcome dissatisfaction of teachers with school programmes which failed to cater effectively for the handicapped and specially disadvantaged.

In general, work experience is regarded as a tool of career education and its aims are to be seen in the context of career education. The development of work experience programmes is a function of student numbers and needs, resources available in terms of staff and time restraints and employer willingness to co-operate, and the relationship of the programme to the careers education and counselling programmes of individual schools.

Forms and selection of work experiences

In Australia, there are evident differences in aims and emphasis of work experience programmes. Many are aimed at the non-academic, potential early school leaver and students with behaviour problems, and focus on manual and semi-skilled jobs. Others try to provide the full range of job experiences including experience in professional, semi-professional and academic employment. Others emphasize community welfare programmes.

While it is recognized that as a matter of principle all secondary students should be able to participate in work experience programmes, the number of students involved and community resources will impose limitations. The Scott Report on Work Experience programmes in New South Wales schools commented that schools should establish priorities that take into account their own disadvantaged groups as well as the needs of other schools in their district.

The need for selection priorities has reinforced arguments for the co-ordination of work experience at a regional or district level, and this has been recognized by the States. In New South Wales, the Scott Report commented that because of the community-based emphasis of work experience, it is important that the various groups affected are kept fully involved and informed in the development and operation of programmes. South Australia has developed a Pilot Handbook suggesting that schools should form advisory groups consisting of staff, students, parents and local employers.

The proportion of school time given to work experience programmes

The actual time allocated to work experience programmes in Australia has not been documented but it varies from State to State and school to school. Some schools devote little or no time to the programmes, others have intensive work experience programmes at the end of Year 12 just prior to students completing school and in conjunction with a more general career preparation programmes, while others, such as the Daramalan College in the Australian Capital Territory, devote one day per week to work experience for disadvantaged groups. In the latter case however, career education is an integral part of students' schooling in Years 9 and 10.

Legislative provision has been made in some States and Territories to provide upper limits on the frequency of work experience participation by students in any one year of schooling. This has been prompted by the need to ensure adequate supervision of students in the work situation, and circumvent any tendency by employers to use a succession of students to replace normal employees.

In Victoria, the Work Experience Act limits the total number of days engaged in work experience to twelve per student per term, or thirty six days per year. The attached project report on 'Work Experience Programmes in Victorian Secondary Schools' outlines the development of work experience programmes in Victoria. New South Wales leaves the schools to decide for themselves limitations on programmes, but at the same time expects them to take into consideration the needs of other schools in the area and local employment conditions.

In the Australian Capital Territory, work experience is restricted to the handicapped or specially disadvantaged, time restrictions being such that a student may not be employed in a work experience programme for more than sixty school days in any year except in a sheltered workshop or activity therapy centre.

Availability of work experience programmes

As discussed above, in the Australian Capital Territory, work experience programmes are only available to the handicapped or specially disadvantaged. Such restrictions do not apply in the States, all secondary students being eligible.

Availability of work programmes will be restricted however by such factors as the importance given overall to career education programmes within individual schools, employer willingness to participate and consequently work being provided. The programmes in Australia generally focus on years 9 and 10 of secondary school and where opportunities are limited, preference is given to the more disadvantaged students. The attached project report II discusses a pilot work experience programme for handicapped secondary school students in New South Wales.

Career education and work experience programmes are not common to primary school curricula, but at the tertiary level, particularly for the professions, trade and other vocationally oriented courses, it has been standard practice for many years to include practical work experience as a compulsory portion of a student's course.

Training and re-orienting teachers and other educational personnel to work experience programmes

Because career education, including work experience, is still in its infancy, although rapidly expanding and continuing to gain acceptance, there is little provision made to train careers teachers, either during the pre-service courses or by means of post-service courses. The need for formal training has been recognized, particularly by Career Education Associations, and these Associations have urged the introduction of such training into teacher courses.

Nevertheless, in some States work experience kits and handbooks have been developed to assist interested teachers to develop work experience programmes. Examples are the Work Experience Kit in Victoria developed by the Work Experience in Schools Committee, and a Pilot Handbook for Use in the Introduction of Work Experience into the School Curriculum developed in South Australia.

The Work Experience Kit discusses the aims of work experience, how to set up a programme and the implications of the Work Experience Act 1974 of Victoria along with guides for teachers on the steps which need to be taken for legislative and industrial reasons in setting up a programme.

Development of instructional materials and the use of mass media

As discussed above, instructional material guides are provided in the Work Experience Kit in Victoria and in the South Australian Pilot Handbook. In other States, where formal work experience programme guides have not been developed, it is left to career education teachers to develop their own instructional material. In New South Wales, at Henry Kendall High School, a career education teacher has developed a Living Skills Curriculum for use by teachers. Also in New South Wales, at Minerva Street School, a Sydney school for mildly handicapped students, a work experience programme was developed supported by a grant from the Schools Commission.

The mass media have not been used to any great extent in the development or dissemination of work experience instructional materials.

Problems encountered

The problems encountered in work experience programmes in Australia have been caused by factors both within and out of school, and most have been touched on above.

Within schools, work experience programmes, along with other aspects of career education, can only be successful if accepted as a part of the total school programme. This requires teacher acceptance of the programmes and a consequent co-operation by them to release students from more traditional curriculum subjects to participate in the

programmes. In schools such as Minerva Street in New South Wales, and at Daramalan College in the Australian Capital Territory, where the programme is aimed at handicapped students, the problem of co-operation is not as difficult, the school programme generally being oriented towards training the students in useful vocational skills.

Parental acceptance has also been found to be important, and it has been found helpful to include them in the actual development of work experience programmes. There has been some evidence, particularly in South Australia, of parental disapproval of the encouragement of girls to participate in programmes which may result in their undertaking work experience in fields not considered to be traditionally female. Better co-operation with parents could overcome such barriers.

A major problem for teachers developing programmes is in arranging work experience in a broad range of fields, thus helping students to be exposed to a greater variety of experiences. This is particularly so in the more rural and isolated areas, and as a possible means of overcoming this it has been suggested that intensive work experience in the cities be arranged during school holiday periods. If such a programme were adopted, it would probably require that students be subsidized for the travel and accommodation costs involved. Even in metropolitan schools, however, schools find it difficult to obtain a range of work experience and some schools have abandoned the scheme, believing that the required organization time does not warrant the return both to the school and the students.

Out of school, problems have arisen mainly in the areas of legislation and industrial awards for students. At present, Victoria is the only State with legislation for work experience enacted, but other States are in the process of introducing relevant legislation. At the Commonwealth level, the legislation necessary to cover industrial matters relating to Commonwealth awards, has yet to be introduced.

2. Pre-vocational education programmes

Pre-vocational education programmes in Australia are conducted by technical colleges to provide students with short introductory courses prior to embarking on more extensive courses in particular technical fields, including

apprenticeships. The students involved in these programmes are normally school leavers aged around sixteen. The aim of the programmes is to reduce the amount of time subsequently spent on formal vocational courses. In the case of pre-apprenticeship courses reduction is also achieved in the time and costs to employers of indenturing apprentices.

3. The integration of general education and technical and vocational education at secondary level

Institutional organization

Until recent years in Australia, schools operated within curricula set down at the central level of State Education Departments. At the same time, there was a system of selective secondary schools geared to the preparation of students for academic courses at universities, as well as technical education schools specializing in preparation for the trades. Of late, the States have gradually introduced comprehensive schooling in preference to selective or specialized schooling, although the State of Victoria has continued to operate technical secondary schools alongside comprehensive schools. These provide a general secondary education together with a range of technical subjects, but do not provide vocational training as such.

At the secondary level, therefore, with an increasing trend towards comprehensive schooling, there has been a similar trend for the integration of all aspects of education - general, technical and vocational - on the premise that the overall aim of education is to develop all aspects of individuals to enable them to cope with life outside the school environment. Preparation for work is one of these aspects, but should not be given major emphasis to the detriment of other aspects of an individual's development.

The curriculum

In Australia, where the States have responsibility for education in general, the development of curricula is very much the prerogative of individual States. As well, parallel with the development of comprehensive schools, there has been a trend to decentralize decision-making in

education policy and to develop schools more representative of the community in which they are placed. These trends have been reflected in part in the development of school-based curricula, which usually contain core group subjects and a range of optional electives.

At the senior secondary levels in particular, however, even though there may be a wide range of electives, students intending to continue on to further education are often constrained in the choice of electives by entrance requirements of tertiary institutions.

Technical/vocational subjects are not normally required components of curricula in Australia, compulsory cores being made up of more traditional subjects relating to the development of basic skills of literacy and numeracy. As well, there is currently a considerable amount of debate within schools of the place of career education in the curriculum, focussing around whether career education should be compulsory. Because career education has been developing rapidly over the last few years, there has not yet been time to consolidate a national approach to career education, although it is expected that the Commonwealth/State Working Party on the Transition from School to Work or Further Study will look into this issue as a part of the preparation of its second report.

The OECD Review of Education Policy in Australia during 1976 recommended that career education should be a compulsory part of the school curriculum and this was endorsed by the First National Conference on Career Education during May 1977. However, before such action is taken, detailed investigation will be necessary. Career Education Associations in the meanwhile would hope to encourage teachers of more general subjects to be aware of the vocational implications of their subject areas and to impart these to students.

Use of workshops/farms in technical and vocational institutions

In Australia, where students attend technical and vocational institutions, the emphasis is not on productive work, although there are exceptions to this.

Combining education and work

At the secondary level, there are some agricultural schools in Australia providing specialized vocational training in primary industry. These schools are on farms the products of which are generally marketed, and often include stud animal herds which are used in breeding programmes. Technical colleges on the other hand are less likely to be involved in production of materials on a commercial basis; their emphasis is on training, though apprentices are engaged in producing marketable commodities at their work places.

There have been developments of late to encourage students who are potential early school leavers to participate in manually oriented activities in schools; in the outer metropolitan areas of Sydney, some students have been engaged in the production of school equipment and activities such as gardening. Although this scheme has only been in operation a short time, already students participating have shown an interest in the work and a more positive orientation to school.

At Daramalan College in the Australian Capital Territory, the vocationally oriented programme for the mildly mentally handicapped students also encourages students to build their own equipment, for example a shed and ramps for use in servicing cars. It has been felt that this has reduced vandalism in the school, the students taking more care and interest in equipment that they have constructed themselves.

The role of technical and vocational institutions in providing technical support and assistance for programmes combining education and productive work experience

Work experience programmes in Australia when conducted by schools tend to draw on the resources of schools and of employers willing to cooperate with schools. However, link courses, providing a bridge between technical colleges and schools have become increasingly available in recent years. By means of such courses, school students interested in particular technical vocations are able to use facilities in technical colleges which are not normally available in schools.

As discussed earlier, the former Technical and Further Education Commission now incorporated into the Tertiary Education Commission has expressed the hope that link programmes may be developed further in Australian TAFE institutions, and believes them to have some advantage over work experience programmes for secondary students.

However, a difficulty of link programmes is fitting them into the normal programmes of TAFE institutions. TAFE systems in Australia are heavily committed to providing adequate facilities and staff for courses designed for post-secondary students, although link programmes could be scheduled to avoid additional demand for space in TAFE institutions. The former Commission recommended link programmes as an expenditure option within its particular purpose grants to the States.

4. Combining education and work experiences by student participation in development tasks and community services

Work experience programmes in Australia do encompass participation in community services but special problems have arisen with non-profit organizations particularly in regard to payment. Catherine Blakers in her report 'School and Work' has outlined some provisions made to overcome these problems. The New South Wales Report of the Committee Appointed to Investigate and Advise on the Implementation of Work Experience Programmes in Government Secondary Schools in New South Wales (the Scott Report) recognized that non-profit organizations would need special consideration particularly on the question of payment to students, and suggested that such organizations should be exempted from some of the legislative requirements of the work experience scheme as a whole.

The Victorian Work Experience Act (1974) has provided that where the arrangement for employment under a work experience scheme is with a community service organization and if a student agrees to donate payment back to the organization, this should be stated in the employment arrangement. Nevertheless, this arrangement, while ensuring that the volunteer organization is not out of pocket from participating in the scheme, does involve unnecessary administrative procedures and book-keeping.

C. Combining Education and Work for Out-of-School Population

1. Non-formal education programmes which aim at the out-of-school population

In Australia non-formal education programmes provide recurrent education opportunities for the out-of-school population. These programmes range from leisure type activities at tertiary education institutions or through private organizations, to remedial programmes to assist people to reach minimum standards of literacy and numeracy, the latter programmes focussing currently on two major groups; the unemployed and non-English speaking migrants.

In the current high youth unemployment circumstances, the Commonwealth Government has seen a need to assist those unemployed youth who are unable to obtain work because of inadequate standards of basic skills, to upgrade such skills, and programmes in remedial education have been developed. These have included the Education Programme for Unemployed Youth (EPUY), the National Education and Training (NEAT) Scheme and the Special Youth Employment Training Programme (SYET). These programmes have as a primary aim the development of job seeking skills, and generally include training in literacy and numeracy.

These programmes were introduced over recent years and detailed evaluation of their effectiveness has not yet been completed. While they may be useful in the short term, as a longer term measure it is probably of greater importance to tackle the problem of inadequate achievement in basic skills at the school, rather than post-school level.

English language programmes for adult migrants are also conducted in Australia, their purpose being to assist newly arrived migrants to achieve sufficient competence in English to be able to cope in a work situation and elsewhere.

2. Age groups specified in national policies for priority attention

The 15-19 age group, particularly early school leavers are currently given highest priority for national attention. This priority was stressed in the Report of the

OECD Group of Examiners on Australian Education Policy, and is reflected in the agenda of the Commonwealth/State Working Party on the Transition from School to Work or Further Study.

3. Links between programmes for in-school and out-of-school populations

It is not common for links to be established in programmes for the in-school and out-of-school populations, although because of the emphasis given to the transition from school to work or further study since 1974, it is to be hoped that schools will in the future take a greater responsibility for the integration into society of its school leavers, with a consequent feedback to the school population of the difficulties encountered by school leavers in their transition into the work-force. Such concepts have not yet been developed in Australia to any great extent.

4. Main priorities for the out-of-school population

The main priorities for the out-of-school population, particularly those unemployed, are the acquisition of skills related to occupations, followed by work-oriented literacy education. However, the Committee of Enquiry into Education and Training, mentioned earlier, has been asked to develop overall national priorities to the year 2000 for the post-secondary population. The Committee is expected to deliver its report in mid-1978.

PART II

A. Work Experience Programmes in Victorian Secondary Schools[1]

1. Brief historic perspective

Work experience programmes have been running in Victorian schools for over ten years. Initially they were mainly confined to students in Special (i.e. schools for "handicapped") and Technical schools and were vocationally orientated. In the early 1970's Victorian high schools started to involve themselves in administering work experience programmes. (Work experience can be defined as work performed with or without payment, by a pupil attending school, for the purpose of providing experience of a general nature in the workaday world.)

By 1974 eighty-one Education Department schools were running work experience programmes (36 High Schools, 32 Technical Schools and 13 Special Schools). The extent of the numbers of schools involved in facilitating work experience for students caused concern to Education Department administrators as, strictly speaking, students whilst at school are prohibited from employment, or are subject to particular restrictions. To clarify the various legal and industrial implications of work experience (e.g. teacher liability, International Labour Organization Conventions, payment of students, worker's compensation, etc) the then Assistant Minister of Education established a Work Experience in Schools Committee early in 1974. This Committee included representatives from the Education Department, the Department of Labour and Industry, the Department of Social Welfare, employer groups, teacher unions, the Trades Hall Council, the Apprenticeship Council and individuals from schools (i.e. any individual or group that would be affected by the employment of students. - Parent representation was not invited initially but this oversight has since been rectified).

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1. Paper prepared by Mr. P. Cole, a Member of the Ministerial Work Experience in Schools Committee in Victoria, and a Member of the Victorian Education Department Work Experience Standing Committee. February, 1978.

As a result of the deliberations of this Committee the Education (Work Experience) Act was passed by Victorian Parliament in October 1974. The main features of this Act are:-

(a) Students who have reached the second year of secondary schooling or are over 13 years of age can, with the written permission of a parent, gain work experience.

(b) The Secretary of the Department of Labour and Industry must be contacted if the student is between 14 and 15 years of age and gaining work experience in a factory.

(c) A student can be 'employed' for up to 12 days per term (i.e. a maximum of 36 days for the year).

(d) Work experience students must be paid a minimum rate of $3 per day if they work more than six hours on any one day. If they work less than six hours on any one day then the minimum rate of payment is 40 cents per hour. Students must be placed on the employer's payroll to be protected by Worker's Compensation.

(e) The student may donate payment back (at his/her discretion and with his/her parent's written consent) to educational, charitable or community welfare organizations.

(f) If the student is going to enter an arrangement that involves them working in an occupational area covered by an award or industrial agreement made under the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1904, then the Secretary of the Victorian Trades Hall Council must first be consulted.

2. Current developments

Work experience programmes have been fostered in Victoria by the introduction of the Education (Work Experience) Act 1974 which sets out the necessary procedures to adopt when arranging work experience for students. In 1976 a State-wide survey revealed that a total of 226 Education

Department schools were running work experience programmes but data on the extent of this involvement is at present inadequate. The number of students each programme caters for differs from school to school. Some programmes are very small; catering for 10 or less students, and others are quite extensive catering for over 100 students. Between eleven and twelve thousand students in Victorian secondary schools participated in work experience programmes in 1976.

In 1976 a full-time Work Experience Executive Officer was appointed to service the Work Experience in Schools Committee and to act as a liaison officer between the Education Department, schools, employers and unions. This person also has the task of fostering regional co-ordination of programmes and promoting the ideas and objectives of work experience co-ordination to members of the community.

A Work Experience Kit has also been prepared and distributed to all post-primary schools in Victoria. Among other things this handbook outlines the implications of the Education (Work Experience) Act 1974, gives advice on how to establish and maintain a programme and provides the following information on the aims of work experience.

3. Aims of work experience

Work experience programmes have developed as a response to a variety of problems facing teachers in schools, problems that range from the obvious to the elusive. Work experience is seen as a possible solution to particular behavioural problems exhibited by groups of students and it is also seen as a vehicle for breaking down the barriers that exist between school and the broader community. Thus, there are differences in organizational and philosophical emphasis between schools running work experience programmes. However, all generally acknowledge that the following aims can be catered for by work experience.

Vocational effects

Work experience provides students with work and observational experience in occupational areas in which they are interested. Work experience often allows the students to observe and participate in skills that many schools cannot provide. Thus one would expect to make a more realistic assessment of the participant's abilities

and deficiencies. Hopefully, this would heighten the individual's awareness of the role that education plays in future vocational pursuits. Many students see their work experience as a kind of 'in-service vocational guidance project' that enables them to make a more realistic assessment of their anticipated future employment.

General educational effect

Work experience enables students to work in a new environment and thus it is seen as an activity that greatly extends the potential experiences that students may gain during their school life. The job experienced is not as important as the emphasis on the student gaining a greater insight into what it means to work.

This not only refers to the new role the student has adopted and the ramifications of this (e.g. change of responsibilities, isolation from peer group, different physical setting, etc.), but it also involves the student in gaining an appreciation of the social environment of work. That is, students are also being exposed to situations where questions of authority and power are being raised; they can gain an insight into the pressures faced by employers and employees; and so on. Although one would not want a pupil to be faced with serious problems of social relationships or a difficult moral decision while on a work experience scheme, nevertheless it will be useful if he becomes aware that these problems exist.

Teachers can use work experience to involve the wider community in the educational process and from this they can gain a greater insight into the effectiveness and relevance of the educational programme offered to their students. Teachers dealing with students who do not readily accept the structure of the school now have a new direction open to them when looking for solutions to a particular individual's problems. Liaison between the school and the broader community is also facilitated, enabling both groups to appreciate the problems and objectives of the other party.

Although the above aims are included in the Work Experience Kit they are adopted and added to by individual schools, Victorian schools being free to make decisions about the sorts of educational experiences they provide.

In the area of work experience the only prescriptive elements are those laid down by the legislative requirements. Thus work experience programmes do vary greatly according to each school's needs and their resources to meet those needs.

4. Organizational models

There are several "organizational" models for work experience programmes that can be described. The time period when the option of seeking work experience is available to students can vary from one designated week during the school year to any time throughout the school year. (i.e. Some programmes are on-going throughout the school year and students are invited to participate whenever they feel such an experience is appropriate, others only operate for one week in the year and all students seeking work experience must participate during the nominated week.)

The Education (Work Experience) Act restricts the student to no more than twelve days work experience per term. The way students can utilize their work experience time also varies greatly. Some schools have adopted a one day a week programme (for 12 weeks a term), others a two week "block" release. Sometime the decision of how students utilize their work experience time is based on the students', teachers', parents' and employers' assessment of the most suitable arrangement. Sometimes however this decision is made by the school on the basis of what is the most administratively expedient organization.

The categories of students to whom work experience is available in schools also varies. The Act enables all students over 13 years of age or who have reached the second year of secondary schooling to participate in work experience; however most schools are servicing the needs of a much narrower range of students.

(a) Many schools restrict work experience to students in a particular year level (years 9 and 10 being the most popular). Very few schools surveyed indicated that their work experience programme was available to all students in year 8 and above.

(b) Several schools make participation in work experience compulsory for particular groups of students (e.g. low achievers or students in a particular subject area) and thus ignore the needs of many other students. Most schools however leave the decision of whether or not to be involved in work experience up to the student.

Some explanation seems necessary as to why schools have adopted the variety of approaches to work experience that they have.

5. Why do work experience programmes vary so much?

The influence of differences in philosophical emphasis

Work experience programmes generally are legitimated by their "general" educational objectives (e.g. increased student self-awareness, a chance to examine some social issue as it manifests itself in the "real world", etc.), and their vocational benefits (e.g. the opportunity students have for job sampling).

It depends on a particular school's emphasis which objective is given prominence. The following descriptions illustrate the extreme positions whereas generally the two objectives (general education and careers education) are subsumed or intertwined rather than posed as alternatives.

Some schools see the chance of expanding a student's insights into a possible future career as a major benefit and view the general educational objectives as a "spin-off" from this experience. Others see the general educational objectives as paramount but also acknowledge that students can gain increased insight into the career options they are exploring.

Both are seeking to provide an experience that results in the student being better equipped to make future career choices. However these differences often seem to result in contrasting organizational models.

Examples of organizational differences

The "vocational awareness" emphasis has resulted in some schools making work experience compulsory for "terminal" or "under-achieving" students; has required

that students nominate a career choice before they can participate; has tracked typing classes into secretarial work experiences and sex-stereotyped office jobs; has required students to focus only on the gathering of vocational data and thus ignoring the many other issues that could be examined. The resultant effect has been that the students' experience have been assessed strictly in terms of how they have fared as employees.

The "general education" emphasis has resulted in some schools sending out students to examine broad social issues (e.g. pollution, sexism in the workforce, worker participation, job satisfaction, unionism etc.,); has meant that students have been given work experience in occupational areas that they are most unlikely to enter (e.g. low achievers working with lawyers and doctors); has sought general data from employers as to the students communication skills and social maturity rather than seeking more specific "employee" orientated data (e.g. punctuality, tidiness); and has meant that vocational maturity and career planning knowledge has not been specifically emphasized as it is assumed that increased exposure to different occupations, and the development of personal confidence and self-awareness will contribute to a much more effective career choice than will a programme trying to provide specific career information.

The influence of administrative difficulties on the organization of work experience programmes

As there is no Victorian Education Department policy providing special staff allowance to schools attempting to provide work experience for students, schools must decide for themselves what time fraction they can afford to give to the administration of a work experience programme. (During 1976 seventy work experience co-ordinators in State schools were carrying out the task *in addition to* their normal full-time teaching duties).

Sometimes the Careers Teacher assumes responsibility for the work experience programme and it is seen to be part of his/her normal duties (the philosophical emphasis is thus most likely to be "vocationally" orientated).

School staffs may not be in support of work experience schemes and some teachers see them as a diversion from the real task of schools (e.g. if a student's basic

communication and numeracy skills are poor then it is argued that these students, who may well be leaving school at the end of the year or are totally disenchanted with formal education, should not be allowed to gain work experience until these skills are developed). Some teachers refuse permission for their students to be exempted from classes for the purposes of gaining work experience.

The geographic location of some schools restricts the range of employer contacts available. (Fifty State secondary schools indicated that this was a major problem in 1976, and that the development of their programme was being greatly hampered as a result). Some schools cannot provide their work experience co-ordinators with the facilities they require (e.g. telephone, filing) to assist them to run their programme more efficiently. (Fifty-five schools cited this as a problem in 1976).

Some results accruing from administrative pressures and different philosophical emphases

As a result of the forces operating within each school, advocates of work experience have had to respond to their individual situation in the best way that they can. Thus the following examples are being nurtured and defended in various schools.

(a) Typing teachers (for example) are forced to run the work experience programme as a practical extension of the typing class (and *only* catering for their typing class) providing their students with a clerical/office experience but with none other; or

(b) Students are streamed into low-achiever groups and given compulsory work experience; or

(c) The work experience programme only operates for one week in the year because of staff hostility to the concept of work experience or because of administrative burdens; or

(d) Only a very limited number of students, selected by the teacher, are permitted to benefit from the experience; or

(e) The time-period for work experience is inflexible (e.g. only on sports afternoons) because of time table constraints; or

(f) Teachers are running programmes in isolation - often with little knowledge of other aspects in the students' total school experience and sometimes without fellow teachers realizing that a particular student is going on, or has been on, work experience; or

(g) Work experience co-ordinators are not adequately carrying out the counselling function required to make the experience more meaningful (i.e. pre and post work experience discussions) because of a lack of support or insufficient time allowance to fulfill this role, or because they do not have adequate rapport with all students, particularly those students that they do not know well. (Some teachers have reported that they are expected to provide a counselling service to over three hundred students, some of whom they only see for a few minutes.)

The responses to the sorts of constraints outlined above vary greatly, and unfortunately some work experience programmes have suffered greatly through being forced to compromise their original objectives. The result is that some programmes tend to be elitist or provide "narrowing" rather than "broadening" career options and educational experiences that are forced upon "under-achieving" students.

6. Further observations regarding objectives and organizations

Work experience programmes functioning under the extremely narrow objectives of the programmes earlier described are fairly rare, however, the descriptions do serve to illustrate the potential abuse that can be made of these programmes. If the emphasis on particular objectives is too restrictive we may find that some of the work experience programmes running in Victorian schools are not so subtle forms of racism, sexism and classism, where minority group children, females and poor children are locked into special job areas.

The more flexible the organization and the more wide ranging the philosophical base the more likely that work experience will provide valuable and positive fulfilment for the broad degree of needs and interests that students exhibit.

Perhaps one of the basic objectives of such a programme should be that students be given the chance of seeing a broader range of options for themselves in the future. Furthermore, the experience should encourage the student to observe, interpret and analyse the multifarious social and political aspect of work. There are many issues that can be brought to the students' attention prior to their undertaking work experience:- worker participation; job satisfaction; the role of the union; methods of advertising; environmental and conservation implications; etc.

The more that Work Experience grows out of a student's increasing awareness that such an activity enables him/her to gain specific information (vocational and other) about society and also enable him/her to examine in a 'real' situation his/her particular 'strengths and weaknesses', personal characteristics and interests, the more successful/beneficial the experience is likely to be.

The above issues are at present being discussed by teachers within schools and a greater appreciation of the "philosophical" implications of particular approaches to work experience is being gained. At a State-wide work experience conference held in February 1978 teachers attempted to crystalize a rationale that incorporates a wide spectrum of issues (e.g. payment, sexism, role of unions, parent involvement, credentialization, assessment, work experience for teachers, staffing policies, etc). The Conference concluded that work experience tends to be seen as a peripheral activity to the basic running of the school, given over to career education teachers only, but in fact for work experience to be effective it should be a part of all school subject areas. Those involved in work experience programmes should be curriculum innovators to ensure the relevance of schooling to total life experiences.

Work Experience is also undertaken by students in Special Schools (i.e. schools for the physically, mentally and socially handicapped) and is seen as a vital part of the student's educational programme. At present, a proposal

to enable an extension of work experience period designated in the Work Experience Act for 'special cases', is before the Victorian Cabinet.

There is also a proposal to amend the Work Experience Act so that the onus for Workers Compensation is placed with the Crown rather than the individual employer.

Of great concern are the ramifications that the State Work Experience Act has when it enters the area of Federal Jurisdiction. For example, students working in occupation areas that are covered by awards under the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1904 strictly speaking should receive the full award wage. Employers are open to fines or claims against them when they involve themselves with work experience programmes and only pay the students three dollars per day as stipulated in the Victorian Work Experience Act.

An accompanying problem is the position of the Victorian Trades Hall Council which endorses students being paid less than award wages, whereas the Australian Council of Trade Unions has no such policy. Industrial action over work experience students working for less than the award (or for students seemingly taking away 'real' workers jobs) is a distinct possibility.

The need to get common legislation between the States is also pressing. Already schools close to the State borders are in a quandry as to the status of the Victorian legislation if the student seeks work experience inter-state.

There is great concern at the disadvantage faced by isolated country students in the area of work experience. Small country towns do not have the facility to provide a broad range of employer activities. To try and ameliorate this problem the Work Experience Standing Committee has been negotiating with the Education Department to establish a city hostel for country students. Students could stay at the hostel for two weeks and be given work experience in an occupation of their choice.

Victorian State Government Departments have been allocated funds from the Budget to pay work experience students. This amount was approximately $40,000 in 1977. The largest Victorian Government "employer" is the Education Department.

7. Evaluation statement

Any evaluation of work experience programmes in Victoria needs to take into account the restrictions and limitations of resources available to schools and employers involved in such schemes. The number of teachers available to devote themselves to administering work experience programmes is growing but in many instances this task is taken on as an addition to normal teaching duties. Employer participation is dependent upon the capacity of the individual business to function when employees are given the extra burden of catering for the requirements of work experience students. Clearly resources within the school and the work-force are finite. Compromises have to be made in the sorts of programmes schools run and the experiences employers provide. Even so, many schools are running extensive programmes and are forging strong ties between employers and the schools.

The evaluation process is also difficult as all programmes are a result of initiatives taken by individual schools. Thus an isolated country school organizes an exchange programme with students from a city school; a typing teacher sees the need for a more realistic environment and organizes work experience in industry; a social science teacher is examining "Poverty in Australia" and arranges for students to work with Social Welfare people or volunteer welfare agencies so that they can gain some insight into the difficulties and actually talk to people experiencing hardship; a careers teachers may arrange a work experience for a student who intends leaving school in an occupational area that the child is keen to explore; etc. All activities are valid educational experiences and all result from the teachers responding to the expressed needs of their students. Work experience provides another dimension to the responses - a teacher can assist pupils to make the transition from school to work.

Given the above observations one can only be impressed by the remarkable energy and enthusiasm of teachers involved in work experience programmes and by the rapid spread of these programmes throughout Victorian schools. In the two years following the introduction of the Education (Work Experience) Act (i.e. 1975-6) one hundred and fifty new programmes were commenced. The impact that this has had on cementing closer ties between

employers and schools is enormous. All parties concerned (teachers, parents, students and employers) fully endorse the growth of these schemes and it appears that work experience programmes in Victoria are rapidly moving from being described as an innovation to being an accepted and highly valued component of the learning experiences available to secondary school pupils. The following extract from the Victorian Work Experience Kit indicates the directions that work experience programmes may take:

"Work experience is seen by many educationists as a ministep towards de-schooling; a wedge that will hopefully be widened to give students more flexible formal school arrangements (perhaps part-time work and part-time study may become a reality at secondary school level) and will result in the general community accepting a greater role in the provision of educational experiences of children".

B. Work Experience Programmes for Handicapped Secondary School Age Students in New South Wales

1. Introduction

Never before in human history have such large proportions of youth been in school for such long periods of time. Before the large-scale development of public school programming, most children spent much of their youth working with adults. During this work time, young people learned how to get along with persons of other ages and provided adults opportunities to relate to young people. Concurrently, youth learned about the realities of the world of work and developed work skills and related competencies. Therefore, one purpose of the work experience programme is to recreate those opportunities to bring youth and adults together in a meaningful, beneficial work situation.

In order to reinforce learning on the job, it was felt necessary to follow up this experience with in-classroom related curriculum to discuss any situations that may arise and to help students prepare for the many decisions to be faced in the years ahead.

The work experience programme is within today's trend of extending the educational programme into the community. Programmes of this nature have enjoyed

widespread acceptance by Education Authorities in North America and New Zealand. In addition, Departments of Education in other Australian States have given their support to the implementation of Work Experience Programmes for those who are handicapped.

2. The special needs of handicapped students

A handicapped child is defined as one who a) has been unable to cope with regular curricula at the secondary level because of physical, sensory or intellectual impairment, and for whom special placement or special educational programmes have been devised; and b) requires special assistance in entering and sustaining a job in the work-force.

Work Experience Programmes have special relevance for students who are disadvantaged by physical, intellectual or social handicaps which have precluded normal learning development. They require special assistance in entering and sustaining a job in the work-force. These students approach the school leaving age with deficits in their experiential background. Many are still physically and emotionally immature and their self-concept is usually inadequately developed; often as a result of their failure to have learned basic social and academic skills.

These factors put them at risk when they have to face the rigours of adult living immediately upon leaving school. School, for the majority, is one of their few secure environments and to this they cling with greater tenacity than their "normal" peers. Because of this, and the fact that they have been used to a reasonable degree of individual attention, their first excursion into the "real" world is fraught with difficulties which are unexpected and for some, quite traumatic.

3. Goals and objectives of the work experience programme

In keeping with the modern trend of extending school beyond the confines of the walls of the school, the curriculum was expanded to include those learning experiences outside the traditional school, thereby adding a more realistic dimension to our curriculum. The objectives of the programme were:

a) To further the development of identified work skills and related competencies for each participant;

b) To provide support and control to the student experiencing difficulties in adjusting to the world of work;

c) To provide students with the opportunity to develop their potentialities by providing a free choice of opportunities which include life-like situations and work experience in addition to the regular school curriculum;

d) To provide opportunities for students to become knowledgeable of the realities of the world of work;

e) To enhance the development of a positive outlook as to self-respect and self-dignity among our students; and

f) To broaden the students' knowledge of the types of work that may be available to them in order that they may select the job that will afford them long term satisfaction.

4. Structure and function of administrative committees

The successful administration and day to day operation of the programme depends heavily on the expertise and co-operation of personnel from both the New South Wales Department of Education and the Federal Department of Employment and Industrial Relations. These personnel operate within the context of *two* committees, each of which has the responsibility for the operation of various aspects of the scheme.

The Committee which exercises central controlling authority over the programme consists of equal representation from both Departments. The overall supervision of the scheme is vested in this committee. It reviews the progress and activities of each School Committee and, when necessary, makes recommendations and suggestions about methods of operation.

The school committee

The operational responsibility for carrying out the scheme rests with the School Committee. Its membership is as follows:

a) The Principal or his/her nominee as Chairman;
b) The Class Teacher;
c) Careers Adviser; and
d) School Counsellor.

This committee has power to co-opt services of other experts it considers necessary, e.g. representatives from employers, local Commonwealth Employment Service, or the Vocational Guidance Bureau.

The school committee is responsible for identifying and assessing students' interests, abilities (skills etc), health and other factors which may be relevant to placement. The committee also makes recommendations about the type of placement regarded as most suitable for each student. The school committee in consultation with representatives from the Central Committee ensures that the school programme followed by each student in the programme complements that of the work experience programme.

Members of the Committee, after having ascertained those employers interested in participating in the programme visit such employers to determine the suitability and type of work experience offered, an analysis of activities involved and skills needed, the degree of supervision, the hours of work, the physical and social environment and conditions, and the restrictions. Other factors included are the geographical location of the employer and the availability of public transport. These activities involve close liaison with local Commonwealth Employment Service Offices, employer/employee bodies and any other community organizations who can offer assistance.

This Committee meets at regular intervals to match students with positions. In consultation with the relevant school committee a work experience programme is developed for each student. Such a programme depends on the students' needs and abilities as well as such considerations as the availability of suitable placements.

In short, the Committee is responsible for ensuring that each student makes progress in the programme. Progress of each student is assessed on the vocational/social assessment sheet which is given as Annex. The form is completed by the trainee's job supervisor.

The following criteria are applied to the selection of students to participate in the scheme:

a) Students must have reached the school leaving age before being permitted to participate in the Programme;

b) The parents of each applicant must furnish a signed letter giving their consent for their son's/daughter's participation in the Programme;

c) The School Committee nominates students for consideration as participants in the scheme to the Central Authority which selects students in terms of their eligibility and the number of work positions available in the area;

d) In determining priorities, the School Committee takes into account:

- the age of the applicant;
- details of the applicant's social, academic and physical and other attainments;
- expressed interests of the applicant; and
- availability of work stations catering for the above characteristics.

Once the School Committee has assigned an applicant to a work situation, it then prepares schedules. These contain job components, as required by the NEAT system, and school components to be taught whilst the student is in the programme together with detailed plans for ongoing evaluation.

The School Committee is responsible for the implementation of the school component of the programme.

Depending on the needs of the employer and the individual student, placement may be one of the following types:

a) a number of days per week (with a desirable minimum being two days) with provision for this number to be varied according to the needs of the student and the employer. The balance of the week will be spent at school; and

b) block periods of full-time employment alternating between work stations or between work stations and school.

Students should, where possible, work at different stations within the one place of employment and have experience with at least three employers. The duration of the total programme should be no longer than 230 days.

For the periods at the work stations, the students are paid the award rate. Employers are paid a training fee consisting of 85% of the adult average award rate for 30 days and then a flat rate of $48.90 for the remaining 200 days. The training fee is made available through the Department of Employment and Industrial Relation's National Employment and Training Scheme (NEAT).

5. Evaluation

The School Committee meets regularly to evaluate the progress of each student in terms of the specific objectives laid down and to make decisions regarding matters such as:

a) termination of the programme and the placement of the student in full-time work;

b) recommendation for return to full-time schooling;

c) varying of the work schedules and criterion levels of success; and

d) varying the types of jobs the student has been involved in.

The programme commenced in 1976 and at that stage catered for 20 students. It now handles 90 students but is still very much in pilot form. Objective appraisal of its effectiveness has not been made to date because to have done so would have necessitated placing too rigid restrictions on its development. That an appreciable proportion of the students have obtained and maintained full-time permanent employment is heartening however.

The current student population includes mildly mentally retarded, deaf, blind and physically handicapped.

ANNEX

STUDENTS' SOCIAL AND VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT SHEET

Name: ..... Sex: .....
(Family) (Given)

Address: .....

..... Phone: .....

School: .....

Date of Birth: ..... Nationality: .....

Height: ..... Weight: .....

Father's Occupation: .....

Hobbies and Interests: .....

.....

Stated Job Interests: .....

.....

V.G.: .....

Personal and General Comments: .....

.....

.....

Disabilities (e.g., Sight, Hearing, Physical Abnormalities): .....

.....

.....

Assessment Sheet Completed By: .....

.....

Date: .....

Key: 1. Never

2. Sometimes

3. Always

V.T. Vital skill absent or insufficiently developed but capable of development, intensive vocational training required

N.A. Not applicable

A. GENERAL WORK PERFORMANCE:	1	2	3	V.T.	N.A.
1. Works consistently					
2. Monitors own performance					
3. Organizes own work area					
4. Cares for tools, equipment, etc.					
5. Works unsupervised					
6. Makes decisions independently					

GENERAL COMMENTS:

.....

B. WORK QUALITY:	1	2	3	V.T.	N.A.
1. Works accurately					
2. Discovers own errors					
3. Overcomes own errors					
4. Expresses interest in product and/or completed job					
5. Strives for neatness and orderliness					

GENERAL COMMENTS:

.....

C. WORK QUANTITY:	1	2	3	V.T.	N.A.
1. Achieves speeds comparable with workmates					
2. Expresses interest in own productivity and output					
3. Seeks alternatives when primary job complete					
4. Seeks means to increase output					

GENERAL COMMENTS:

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D. JOB COMPREHENSION:	1	2	3	V.T.	N.A.
1. Displays retentive capacity					
2. Displays recall capacity					
3. Adheres to instructions after one telling					
4. Comprehends and acts upon verbal instructions					
5. Comprehends and acts upon job demonstrations					
6. Comprehends and acts upon written instructions					

GENERAL COMMENTS:

.....

Annex

E. WORK TOLERANCE:	1	2	3	V.T.	N.A.
1. Copes with work pressure					
2. Copes with own mistakes/failures					
3. Copes with instructive criticism					
4. Copes with distractions					
5. Copes with frustrating incidences					
6. Adapts easily to new processes					

GENERAL COMMENTS:

.....

F. WORK INTERPERSONAL SKILLS:	1	2	3	V.T.	N.A.
1. Honest					
2. Friendly and agreeable					
3. Polite and considerate of others					
4. Communicates with others					
5. Reasonably competitive					
6. Socially mature (compared with workmates)					
7. Relates appropriately to peers					
8. Relates appropriately to supervisors					
9. Works well in team					
10. Works well alone					

GENERAL COMMENTS:

.....

G. COMMUNICATION:	1	2	3	V.T.	N.A.
1. Speaks clearly					
2. Speaks sensibly					
3. Maintains appropriate stance, expression etc.					
4. Uses telephone appropriately					

GENERAL COMMENTS:

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H. APPEARANCE:	1	2	3	V.T.	N.A.
1. Neat and tidy					
2. Clean					
3. Cares for clothes					

GENERAL COMMENTS:

.....

I. TIMEKEEPING:

	1	2	3	V.T.	N.A.
1. Arrives on time in morning					
2. Returns promptly after breaks					
3. Works full week					
4. Has reasonable cause for absent days					
5. Works right up to finishing time					

GENERAL COMMENTS:

.....

J. JOB INTERVIEW SKILLS:

	1	2	3	V.T.	N.A.
1. Acts appropriately in interview					
2. Can describe previous experience					
3. Can outline job interests/goals					
4. Presents as motivated to work					
5. Asks appropriate questions					

GENERAL COMMENTS:

.....

K. MOBILITY:

	1	2	3	V.T.	N.A.
1. Can travel by bus					
2. Can travel by train					
3. Observes pedestrian road rules					
4. Understands timetables					

GENERAL COMMENTS:

.....

L. PHYSIOLOGICAL FACTORS:

	1	2	3	V.T.	N.A.
1. Well co-ordinated (i.e., not clumsy)					
2. Uses tools adroitly					
3. Copes with physical demands of work (i.e., stamina)					
4. Displays sufficient general dexterity					

GENERAL COMMENTS:

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